

CCD BULLETIN

Issues in Coastal Community Development

FROM THE FIELD: SAFE GROWTH = SMART GROWTH

Delaware's coast, like coastal areas across the nation, is experiencing a tremendous population boom. Rapid development and urbanization of the coastal zone has resulted in an explosion in the number of residents, visitors, homes and infrastructure subject to hurricanes, northeasters, and winter storms. The storm surge, high winds, and flooding associated with these storm events can result in millions of dollars of damage each year. However, according to a survey conducted by the Institute for Business and Home Safety in 2002, most communities fail to include natural hazards policies or implementation strategies in their comprehensive or general plans.

To help reduce coastal communities' susceptibility to coastal hazards, Delaware Sea Grant is working with state and local officials, FEMA and other federal agencies, building inspectors, architects, designers, builders, and homeowners to increase awareness of sound coastal construction methods. The ultimate goal is to reduce loss of life and property damage, and to mitigate economic impacts associated with living along the coast.

For example, Delaware Sea Grant played an instrumental role in the creation of a "Coastal Construction Council" in Sussex County. The group, made up of building inspectors, designers, architects, state coastal managers, and county planning officials, meets regularly to discuss issues related to proper housing construction, flood insurance issues, flood and hazard mitigation, and other relevant topics. The council continues to remain active and is a good conduit for communication between state and local jurisdictions.



Bethany Beach, Delaware



Dewey Beach, Delaware



Construction demonstration house

Sea Grant has also formed educational partnerships with small businesses and private companies (roofing and siding supply companies, home improvement warehouse companies, storm shutter businesses, etc.) to promote improved coastal construction methods and materials. In addition, along with numerous partners, Sea Grant coordinated the fabrication of a coastal construction demonstration house which is displayed at various public venues, educating builders and homeowners about proper techniques and materials for building homes in Delaware coastal areas.

Sea Grant's efforts to improve construction standards in the coastal regions of the state are beginning to show positive benefits. One recent example is the Sussex County Council's adoption in January 2005 of new codes, including designation of a high-wind zone along the Atlantic Coast where stricter construction practices will be enforced. Overall, Sea Grant's efforts are helping to improve construction and design of coastal structures, increase awareness about opportunities to better fortify homes and businesses against extreme wind and flood events and reduce recovery costs due to storm damage in coastal Delaware.

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RECOMMENDED READING

Post-Disaster Planning Opportunities

By Jim Schwab, AICP

This article from the American Planning Association's newsletter *Zoning News* discusses ways to use planning and zoning creatively in the aftermath of a disaster to address vulnerabilities and encourage more sustainable redevelopment. Though not limited to coastal applications, the article lays out a basic strategy for defining post-disaster objectives and explores specific zoning approaches used in reconstruction of several areas. It can be downloaded at:

www.planning.org/katrina/pdf/ZNAug98.pdf



SEA GRANT RESOURCES

Haznet.org

www.haznet.org

Hosted by the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium, this site provides information on hazards extension and research projects from Sea Grant programs throughout the country, as well as links to outreach materials and related publications.

Protecting Our Ports and Harbors

www.csc.noaa.gov/products/tsunamis/index.htm

This website was jointly developed by Oregon and Washington Sea Grant, NOAA and USGS, focusing on the vulnerability of the Pacific Northwest to tsunamis and earthquakes. It includes a planning tool for assessing coastal vulnerability to these hazards, based on a case study for Yaquina Bay, Oregon.

See also...



www.eden.lsu.edu

Extension Disaster Education Network



COMMUNITY TOOL SHED

Planning for Post-Disaster Recovery and Reconstruction

by Robert E. Deyle, Charles C. Eadie, Jim Schwab, Richard A. Smith, and Kenneth C. Topping

From the American Planning Association, this all-hazards guidance manual helps local planners to develop plans for post-disaster recovery and reconstruction. It includes case studies of five different hazard scenarios—flood, earthquake, tornado, wildfire, and hurricane. The report also offers planning tools for managing long-term community recovery after a natural disaster. Specific chapters provide guidance for identifying local natural hazards, assessing risk, and outlining the process of developing and implementing plans for post-disaster recovery and reconstruction. The full document is not available for download, but can be purchased (\$44) at:

www.planning.org/bookservice/description.htm?BCODE=P483

A Planner's Tool Kit

www.planning.org/katrina/pdf/PAS483Ch5.pdf

This document presents an inventory of the tools that can be used to address hazard mitigation and post-event rebuilding issues, including measures that can be taken in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, as well as options for longer-term actions. The text covers planning tools such as property acquisition and floodplain planning, zoning tools such as setbacks and overlay districts, and subdivision controls such as open space requirements. Building codes and financial tools are also discussed, and a full model recovery and reconstruction ordinance is provided

This is Chapter 5 of *Planning for Post-Disaster Recovery and Reconstruction* (listed above), and is available for free download at the link above.